



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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COMMISSIONER

MEMORANDUM:

To: Superintendents of Schools
School Nurse Leaders
School Physicians

From: Paul J. Cote, Jr. 
Commissioner of Public Health

Date: September 15, 2005

**Subject: Health Assessments and Immunizations for School-age Children and Youth
Displaced by Hurricane Katrina**

Many Massachusetts schools are enrolling students from Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama as a result of their relocation from those areas to our area. In earlier correspondence from Dr. David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education, school districts have been informed that the provisions of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act require schools to immediately enroll homeless students into school.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, these students may be enrolled without health and immunization information. Due to the devastation in the hurricane areas, it may take several months to recover student health records, if ever. In the meantime, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health would like to provide the following guidance on health assessments and immunizations.

Health Assessments

If students do not have any health records, they should be referred to a Massachusetts primary care provider to complete a health assessment. Other options may include a health assessment by the school physician, a school-based health center or community health center. See attached for information about expedited MassHealth enrollment specifically for those displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Interim Immunization Recommendations for Students Displaced by Hurricane Katrina

Most students will arrive in Massachusetts without immunization records. According to guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), students age 10 years or younger should be considered up-to-date with their immunizations, and given any doses recommended for their current age. In addition, students 11-18 years of age should also be considered up-to-date, and given any doses or vaccines recommended for their current age. Please refer to the MDPH Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule 2005 for specific recommendations (http://www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/epii/imm/guidelines_sched/chiimm.pdf).

From a review of school requirements in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, students coming from those states have similar requirements for DTaP, Polio, and MMR. However, the hepatitis B and varicella requirements vary so these vaccinations may be indicated. Please see the attached State Vaccination Requirement Sheet for a comparison of state requirements.

However, at some point, if immunization records are still not available, students may need to be immunized (or re-immunized). MDPH recommends waiting initially until January 2006 to see if the immunization records will be recovered, and we will provide additional recommendations if the records are still not accessible at that point in time. We hope to be able to access data from the affected states during the recovery process.

At some point, if immunization records are not available, students may need to be re-immunized. We recommend waiting initially until January 2006 to see if the immunization records will be recovered, and we will reassess this if the records are still not accessible by then. We hope to be able to access data from the states affected later in the recovery phase.

In addition to the health assessments and immunization information, the CDC has information on other health concerns that may be useful to you (<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/>). The information is updated frequently, so please continue to check the website regularly.

Please call the MDPH Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 or (888) 658-2850 if you have any questions regarding immunization requirements and recommendations.

You may contact the MDPH School Health Unit at 617-624-6060 for further assistance with general school health questions.

For further questions regarding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and other issues regarding homeless students, please contact Peter Cirioni, State Coordinator, at 781-338-6294 or Sarah Slautterback, Staff Specialist, at 781-338-6330 at the Office for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Information will also be posted on the MDOE and DPH websites.

cc. David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education

Enclosures:

Expedited MassHealth Enrollment for Displaced Persons
Comparison of State Vaccination Requirements for School Entry
Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements 2005

PROCESSING OF MASSHEALTH APPLICATIONS FOR EVACUEES FROM KATRINA

MassHealth has decided to provide Hurricane Katrina Evacuees who have relocated to Massachusetts with a Special Standard benefit. Applicants will need to complete a paper MBR and fax them to the closest MassHealth Enrollment Center. MassHealth has established a special process to expedite these applications and identify the Hurricane Katrina Evacuees to this special Standard benefit. MassHealth has retroactively processed eligibility for Katrina Evacuees who filed an application within the past day prior to the availability of this special benefit.

In order to best serve this population in an expedited manner we ask that you complete a **paper MBR** and fax the MBR to the MassHealth Enrollment Center closest to your facility. Please identify the application as “Katrina Applicant” on the cover page of the MBR in the upper right hand corner referred by field. This field is in the “for office use only “ box. This identification enables MassHealth to place a systematic identifier that will allow us to better serve Hurricane Katrina applicants. It is important that applicants use the Massachusetts address where the applicant is currently residing. Providers should try to obtain proof that the applicants are from the Hurricane affected areas when at all possible. Our goal is to process these applications in a quick and expeditious manner. Please be sure that all questions are answered completely and that the applications are signed. MassHealth will also require a signed PSI form allowing us to share application status and notices with each provider site submitting an application.

Virtual Gateway applications should not be filed for Katrina Evacuees. MassHealth will not be able to expedite processing and identify Katrina Evacuees to this special benefit if a provider files Virtual Gateway Applications.

The MassHealth Enrollment Centers contact information is listed below.

Revere MassHealth Enrollment Center
(781) 485-3400 FAX
(800) 322-1448
Springfield MassHealth Enrollment Center
(413) 785-4180 FAX
(800) 322-5545
Taunton MassHealth Enrollment Center
(508) 828-4615 FAX
(800) 242-1340
Tewksbury MassHealth Enrollment Center
(978) 863-9300 FAX
(800) 408-1253

State Vaccine Requirements for School Entrance/Attendance

Vaccine Exemptions	Louisiana Medical/Religious/Philosophical	Mississippi Medical	Alabama Medical/Religious
DTaP, DT, Td	DC/HS - Age Appropriate K-12, new entrants - 4 or 5 doses, 1 dose after age 4 MS – Booster Td new entrants only College, University - Td- Freshman and new enrollees	DC/HS - 4 doses before age 4; one dose after age 4 K-12 - 4 doses, 1 dose after age 4 MS – Booster Td not required	DC/HS – Age appropriate K - 4 doses, last dose after age 4 MS - Td booster 5-10 years after preschool booster
Polio	DC/HS - Age appropriate K-12 – 4 doses, last dose after age 4	DC/HS - Age appropriate K-12 - 3 doses, last dose after age 4	DC/HS – 1 dose before admission; age appropriate K-12 - 3 doses, last dose after age 4
MMR	DC/HS – 1 dose after age 1 K - 1 dose after age 1, 2 nd dose measles prior to entry New Entrants – required prior to entry MS – 2 nd dose measles required for new entrants only	DC/HS - 1 dose after age 1 K – 2 doses after age 1 (2 nd dose measles required prior to entry) MS – 2 nd dose measles not required College, University— MMR, M2- New enrollees at State 4-year colleges	DC/HS – 1 dose after age 1 K – 1 dose after age 1; 2 nd dose measles prior to entry MS – 2 nd dose measles prior to entry College/University - 2 doses MMR required for all entrants to four-year colleges
Hepatitis B	DC/HS - Age appropriate K – Required for entry MS – Required for new entrants only	DC/HS – Not required K - 3 doses MS – Not required	None
Varicella	DC/HS, K – Required prior to entry MS – Required for new entrants only	DC/HS, K – 1 dose after age 1 MS – Not required (Documented history of disease accepted)	DC/HS – 1 dose after age 1 K-4 – 1 dose after age 1; increases yearly by one grade until 2013 (Documented history of the disease is accepted)
Hepatitis A	None	None	None
Pneumococcal	None	None	None

Guide: DC/HS=Day Care/Head Start; K=Kindergarten; MS=Middle School

(Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 9/05)